

Eric P. Newman

6450 Cecil Ave.
St. Louis, Mo. 63105

August 13, 1990

Mr. Bill Bryson
c/o William Morrow & Co., Inc.
105 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Please forward to author

Dear Mr. Bryson:

Your book **The Mother Tongue** was a stimulating delight. "I shall lose no time in reading it" again (P. 235).

Being a numismatist, I feel it is proper for me to suggest an amendment to your statement on page 163 that the first recorded use of the word dollar in America was 1782. The enclosed copy of an article I wrote concerns the use of it as a monetary unit in Maryland in 1767 and shows a prior use in 1749 in Massachusetts. These referred to the Spanish dollar just as Jefferson did.

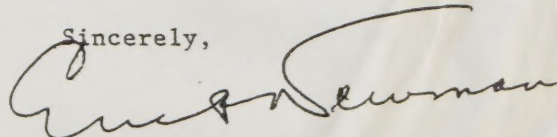
The origin of the \$ sign which you refer to is in my opinion correct as there are early documents from New Orleans which look like an S with a small p superimposed. I will give you citations if you wish. I happen to be working on the first use in type of the \$ sign and have advanced it chronologically.

I am now trying to convince Random House to accept my study of the origin of the word phony (see your page 176) as I am satisfied it comes from a derisive modification of funny, as used in "funny business," and wrote an article accordingly long ago.

I also call your attention to a book in English which is a lipogram without the letter e (see your page 231). My son owns it and he will write you the detail if you wish.

Thank you for writing **The Mother Tongue**.

Sincerely,



Eric P. Newman

EPN:bv

September 24, 1990

Mr. Eric P. Newman
St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Mr. Newman:

Many thanks for your letter and for your extremely helpful article on the dollar, which I shall certainly take account of when Mother Tongue is revised.

Please forgive the delay in answering, but William Morrow forwards letters to me in large bunches at irregular intervals, so they are sometimes slow in reaching me. I must beg your forgiveness, too, for the shortness of my reply, but the volume of mail has been such that the only when I can reply to them all is to do so briefly.

At all events, I am obviously delighted that you enjoyed The Mother Tongue and extremely grateful to you for taking the time and trouble to let me know -- as well as giving me so much useful information for future editions of the book. Thank you.

With all best wishes,

Bill Bryson

Bill Bryson
Manor House
Kirkby Malham
North Yorkshire
England